



Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services



HEALTH ALERT NETWORK Update

TO: Nebraska Healthcare Providers & Laboratories

FROM: Joseph M. Acierno, M.D., J.D. Thomas J. Safranek, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer State Epidemiologist
State of Nebraska 402-471-2937 PHONE
402-471-1759 PHONE 402-471-3601 FAX

RE: Novel Influenza A (H7N9) Virus Update

DATE: April 25, 2013

The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to report increases in the number of cases of the novel influenza A (H7N9) virus infections in several provinces in China. No cases of H7N9 have been detected in the United States or anywhere outside of China at this time. As of April 23, 2013, there have been 108 reported cases of human infection with this new H7N9 virus; 22 people have died. While most of the reported cases of human infection with this virus had very serious illness, some had milder illness. China is conducting follow-up investigations among close contacts of people infected with H7N9 to assess for human-to-human spread of this virus. At present there is no evidence of sustained (ongoing) person-to-person spread.

Nebraska health care providers who see patients with influenza-like illness (fever plus cough or sore throat) who have a recent (within 10 days of illness onset) travel history to China should consider performing a rapid influenza diagnostic test (RIDT). If positive, contact our office or your local public health department (www.dhhs.ne.gov/lhd) immediately to arrange for further testing at NPHL. If negative, this may still represent a H7N9 infection, as the RIDTs may not detect these viruses. If influenza is a serious consideration, please contact our office or your local public health department immediately to arrange for testing at NPHL. Later this week our public health lab will receive the necessary reagents to confirm the presence of an H7-strain of flu virus.

Our website (www.dhhs.ne.gov/avianflu) includes guidance for such testing, e.g. influenza specimen collection guidelines and procedures. For questions related to influenza A (H7N9), please call: during NDHHS office hours (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday-Friday) 402-471-2937; after hours 402-471-1983.

Interim guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and updates from the WHO can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-virus.htm> & <http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/> respectively as well as www.dhhs.ne.gov/avianflu.